

“CHRIST—THE FIRSTFRUITS”

Eric Lyons, Apologetics Press

<https://apologeticspress.org/christthe-firstfruits-783/>

In 1st Corinthians 15, Paul wrote at length concerning the resurrection of the dead, because some of the Christians in Corinth taught “*that there is no resurrection of the dead*” (12). As one of his proofs for the Christian’s eventual resurrection, Paul pointed to the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and showed that the two stand or fall together, saying, “*if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins*” (16-17)! After hypothetically arguing from the absurd in an attempt to get the Corinthian Christians to see that their stance on the final resurrection completely undermined Christianity, Paul proceeded to demonstrate that Christ **had** risen, and thus made the resurrection of the dead inevitable. It is in this section of scripture that some find a difficulty. Beginning with verse 20, Paul wrote:

*“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become **the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But **each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming”* (20-23).

In view of the fact that Jesus was not the first person ever to arise from the dead (cf. 2nd Kings 13:21; Luke 7:14-15; Matthew 10:8; 11:5), some have questioned why the apostle Paul twice described Jesus as “*the firstfruits*” from the dead in 1st Corinthians 15. Did Paul err? Was he ignorant of the widow’s son whom God revived at Zarephath (1st Kings 17:22)? Did he not know that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44)? How could Paul legitimately speak of Christ as “*the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep?*”

One solution to this alleged discrepancy can be found in the fact that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead—**never to die again**. All who have ever arisen from the dead, including the sons of both the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite (2nd Kings 4:8-37), the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-43), Lazarus, et al., died in later years. Jesus, however, accurately could be called “*the firstfruits*” of the dead because “*Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him*” (Romans 6:9). All others who previously were raised at one time, died again, and are among

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those who “*sleep*” and continue to wait for the bodily resurrection; only Jesus has truly conquered death. In this sense, Christ is “*the firstborn from the dead*” (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; cf. Acts 26:23).

Another possible explanation of the difficulty surrounding 1st Corinthians 15:20,23 and Paul’s use of the word “*firstfruits*” (Greek *aparche*) is to understand how “*firstfruits*” was used in the Old Testament. Under the Old Law, the firstfruits were the earliest gathered grains, fruits, and vegetables that the people dedicated to God in recognition of His faithfulness for providing the necessities of life. The Israelites were to offer to God a sheaf of the first grain that was harvested on the day after the Sabbath following the Passover feast (Leviticus 23:9-14). Paul may have used the term “*firstfruits*” in this letter to the Corinthian church to reinforce the certainty of the resurrection. Just as the term “*firstfruits*” indicates that “the first sheaf of the forthcoming grain harvest will be followed by the rest of the sheaves, Christ, the firstfruits raised from the dead, is the guarantee for all those who belong to him that they also will share in his resurrection” (Kistemaker, 1993, p. 548). Jesus is God’s “*firstfruits*” of the resurrection. And, like the Israelites, God will gather the rest of the harvest at the final resurrection. It may be that Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand (by way of metaphor) that Christ’s resurrection is a pledge of our resurrection. It is inevitable—guaranteed by God Himself.

“This constant lying is not aimed at making the people believe a lie, but at ensuring that no one believes anything anymore. A people that can no longer distinguish between truth and lies cannot distinguish between right and wrong. And such a people, deprived of the power to think and judge, is, without knowing and willing it, completely subjected to the rule of lies. With such a people, you can do whatever you want.”

– Hannah Arendt

“If every time you ‘restudy’ an issue you either always confirm what you already believed or consistently change your mind to some new view, put down your Bible and restudy yourself. No one is always that wrong or that right. Therefore, the Bible is not what is leading the ‘restudy’ – you are.”

– Perry Hall

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS..."**

RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS

LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN

SETTINGS OF SILVER"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Spiritual growth is going from having thin skin and a hard heart to having thick skin and a tender heart."

– John Stott

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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I TRIED A DRINK

Kyle Ellison

Many years ago I tried a drink, a drink that when consumed caused me to feel lighter, caused me to find relief in my many cares and pains, a drink which made me a different person when I consumed it, a drink which I still consume, need and crave every single day. I took this drink when I drank of The Living Water.

I have had a drink that has and continues to satisfy me to this very day and I need no other. With this drink, I can have a wonderful time, I can be an enjoyable person, I can find help in this drink to face the challenges of life, this drink calms me, steadies me, and keeps me upright. Friend, there is only one drink that will truly satisfy and still your troubled heart and that is the drink of water that only comes from Jesus.

The only drink that can help your problems and calm your mind will be the one that Jesus alone can give.

"Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

"Oh, taste and see that Jehovah is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (Psalm 34:8).

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37).

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist